

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 05290 01 OF 02 221732Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG PRIORITY
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
USDEL MC BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE
CINC EUR VAIHINGEN
CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG
CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 05290

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MILI NATO GW IT US
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PAGE 02 BONN 05290 01 OF 02 221732Z

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER APEL'S COMMENTS ON AWACS
(NATO AEW SYSTEM)

BEGIN SUMMARY. MINISTER APEL TOLD ME ON MARCH 21 THAT

HE WOULD WORK HARD FOR GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN AWACS, BUT THAT OBTAINING SUFFICIENT FUNDS WOULD BE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IN THE SHORT TERM. HE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF POSTPONING GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN THE SYSTEM FOR UP TO TWO YEARS. I RECOMMEND THAT SECRETARY BROWN, DURING HIS APRIL 13 VISIT TO BONN, MAKE A STRONG APPEAL TO BOTH MINISTER APEL AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT FOR A PROMPT COMMITMENT BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE NATO AEW SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MY MARCH 21 CALL ON MINISTER APEL, HE SAID HE WOULD "DEFEND AWACS AND FIGHT FOR IT," BUT THAT HE KNEW HE WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY OBTAINING THE NECESSARY FUNDS, PARTICULARLY IN THE SHORT TERM. HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED A LETTER FROM FINANCE MINISTER MATTHOEFFER INDICATING THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY WOULD NOT BE PROVIDED WITH ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR AWACS. MOREOVER, APEL OBSERVED THAT THE CABINET HAD "ALWAYS TAKEN THE POSITION" THAT NO SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS FOR AWACS COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. APEL SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD BE WILLING TO PUSH HARD FOR AWACS AS EARLY AS MAY OF THIS YEAR (I.E., AT THE DPC AND THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT).

2. APEL EMPHASIZED THAT WHEN FORMER MINISTER LEBER STATED AT NATO LAST DECEMBER THAT THE FRG WOULD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 05290 01 OF 02 221732Z

PARTICIPATE IN AWACS, HE DID NOT HAVE THE TOTAL APPROVAL OF THE CABINET, OR OF THE FINANCE MINISTER (APEL HIMSELF, AT THE TIME), OR OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES. FURTHERMORE, APEL SUGGESTED THAT THE BUNDESTAG HAD NOT BEEN KEPT SUFFICIENTLY WELL INFORMED OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF AWACS WITHIN THE GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTRY AND IN NATO.

3. APEL SAID HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF AWACS FUNDING WITH BUNDESTAG MEMBERS OF THE SPD/FDP RULING COALITION, WITH MANFRED WOERNER (CDU), CHAIRMAN OF THE BUNDESTAG DEFENSE COMMITTEE, AND WITH OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. IT WAS CLEAR FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS THAT THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO AWACS IN THE BUNDESTAG, AND NO LITTLE COOLNESS TO IT IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. BUNDESTAG MEMBERS WERE SUGGESTING THAT MORE MOVEMENT ON THE "TWO-WAY STREET" WOULD BE NECESSARY IF GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN AWACS WERE TO BE APPROVED. THE UNIFORMED SERVICES FEARED THAT AWACS COULD DRAIN FUNDS AWAY FROM OTHER WEAPONS SYSTEMS WHICH THEY VALUED HIGHLY.

4. APEL SAID THAT, GIVEN THE SHORT-TERM FUNDING PROBLEM, "ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE TO POSTPONE AWACS A BIT, UP TO, FOR EXAMPLE, TWO YEARS." HE SAID SUCH A POSTPONEMENT MIGHT MAKE SENSE BECAUSE, "AFTER 1982" AWACS WOULD BE MUCH EASIER TO FUND.

5. FINALLY, APEL MENTIONED HIS DISPLEASURE OVER WHAT HE CONSIDERED THE SMALL AMOUNT (ONE MILLION DOLLARS) OF THE

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PAGE 01 BONN 05290 02 OF 02 221739Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6997

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AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 05290

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PROJECTED ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO AWACS. HE SAID THAT

SUCH MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS DID NOT AUGUR WELL FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE, AND HE INDICATED THAT THE GERMAN DELEGATION TO THE DPC WOULD WORK FOR A LARGER ITALIAN SHARE OF THE COSTS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE BENEFITS
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PAGE 02 BONN 05290 02 OF 02 221739Z

OF AWACS TO THE FLANKS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY GREAT BECAUSE THE EARLY WARNING FACILITIES WHICH ALREADY EXIST IN THE FLANK AREAS ARE INFERIOR TO THOSE IN THE CENTRAL REGION. THIS WAS ALL THE MORE REASON WHY THE ITALIANS SHOULD INCREASE THEIR CONTRIBUTION.

6. I EMPHASIZED TO APEL THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ASCRIBES TO EARLY GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN AWACS, AND I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT, DESPITE THE FUNDING DIFFICULTIES WHICH HE HAD MENTIONED, THE NATO AEW SYSTEM COULD BE GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL IN MAY. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE FRG'S SHARE OF THE PAYMENTS WOULD, UNDER CURRENT PLANS, BE CONCENTRATED IN LATER YEARS. BY WAY OF REACTION TO BUNDESTAG SKEPTICISM OVER THE "TWO-WAY STREET," I POINTED TO THE TWO EXAMPLES OF RECENT PROGRESS IN THIS AREA, THE US ARMY/DOD DECISION IN FAVOR OF THE GERMAN TANK GUN AND THE APPROVAL BY SECRETARY BROWN OF THE PROGRAM FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF GERMAN NON-TACTICAL VEHICLES FOR USE BY US FORCES IN GERMANY. I ALSO MENTIONED THE US GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR LOCATING THE AWACS MAIN OPERATING BASE (MOB) IN THE FRG.

7. APEL SAID THAT OF COURSE THE APPROVAL OF AWACS IN MAY WOULD BE A "GOOD SCENARIO, IF POSSIBLE." HE SAID HE WOULD "FIGHT FOR THE EXTRA MONEY," BUT AGAIN QUESTIONED WHETHER IT COULD BE FOUND IN THE SHORT TERM.

8. APEL SAID HE OF COURSE LOOKED FORWARD TO DISCUSSING AWACS WITH SECRETARY BROWN ON APRIL 13.

9. COMMENT: APEL DISPLAYED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, BUT PAINTED A RATHER DISCOURAGING PICTURE. HE MAY BE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BONN 05290 02 OF 02 221739Z

EXAGGERATING THE FUNDING PROBLEM AS A RESULT OF HIS NEWNESS IN OFFICE AND HIS NATURAL TENDENCY, AS A FORMER FINANCE MINISTER, TO BE CAUTIOUS ON FINANCIAL QUESTIONS. AWACS EXPERTS AT THE STAFF LEVEL MAY FIND WAYS AROUND SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES. MOREOVER, IF SCHMIDT, APEL

AND GENSCHER WERE ALL TO TAKE THE FIRM POSITION THAT FRG PARTICIPATION IN AWACS SHOULD BE AGREED TO THIS SPRING, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO BRING THE BUNDESTAG ALONG.

10. I WOULD THEREFORE RECOMMEND THAT, DURING HIS VISIT TO BONN ON APRIL 13, SECRETARY BROWN BE PREPARED TO MAKE A STRONG APPEAL TO BOTH MINISTER APEL AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT FOR A PROMPT COMMITMENT BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE NATO AEW SYSTEM.

11. OF COURSE, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE BUNDESTAG AND WITH OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IN ORDER TO DISCUSS AWACS FURTHER AND TO URGE APPROVAL. ON THE BASIS OF THESE CONVERSATIONS, WE SHALL ATTEMPT TO PREPARE SPECIFIC POINTS WHICH SECRETARY BROWN MIGHT WISH TO EMPHASIZE DURING HIS VISIT TO BONN.

12. MINISTER APEL'S MARCH 21 COMMENTS TO ME ON OTHER ISSUES ARE REPORTED BY SEPTEL.
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Message Attributes

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